

Policy Review on the level of attention given to forests for climate change adaptation: Some Observations from Cameroon

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Background

- Though the least carbon emitter, developing countries particularly those in Sub-Saharan Africa are likely to suffer most from the impacts of CC ([Nkem et al. 2007](#))
- The vulnerability of these countries to CC and their low adaptive capacity to present and projected climate change scenarios has been stressed in several global assessment reports ([e.g. MEA 2005; Stern Review 2006; IPCC AR4 2007](#)).

Background

- This is because many poor majority in developing countries are highly dependent on climate-sensitive resources for their livelihoods.
- These same livelihood activities contribute a significant proportion to the GDP of most of these countries, making national development also susceptible to climate change uncertainties.
- Some of the implications include the inability to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, and ensuring environmental sustainability

Background

- Tropical forest ecosystems supply the goods and services for local livelihoods and national development
- As climate change will have marked impacts on the functioning of the forest ecosystems, the livelihoods of the people that depend on them become inevitably vulnerable
- Adaptation becomes a response to this challenge

Objective

- To examine the level of attention given to forests for climate change adaptation using Cameroon as a case study

Methods

- Review and analysis of major forest policy documents and other related documents
 - ✓ 1994 Forest Law
 - ✓ Forest-Environmental Sector Programme
 - ✓ PRSP
 - ✓ National Communication to UNFCCC

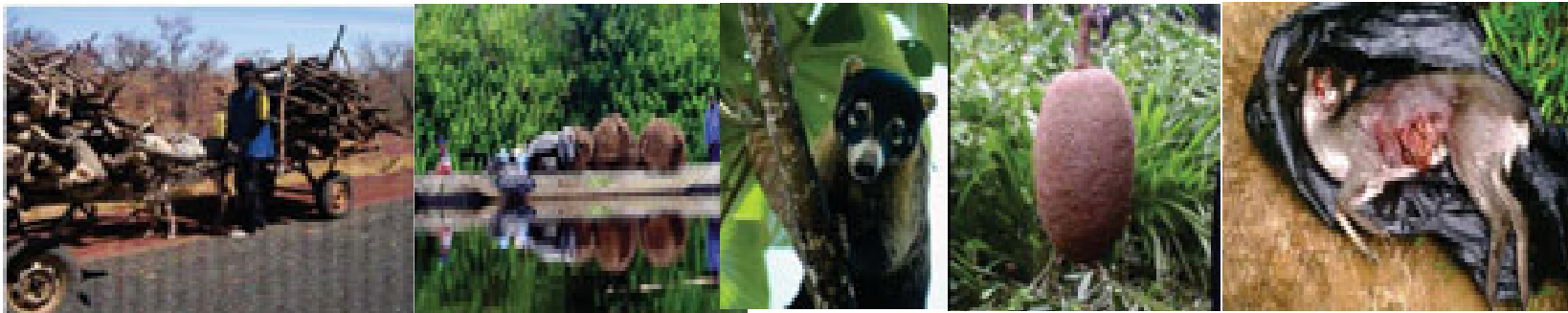
Why Forest & Adaptation?

Forest as an ecosystem is more than just a sector for lumber

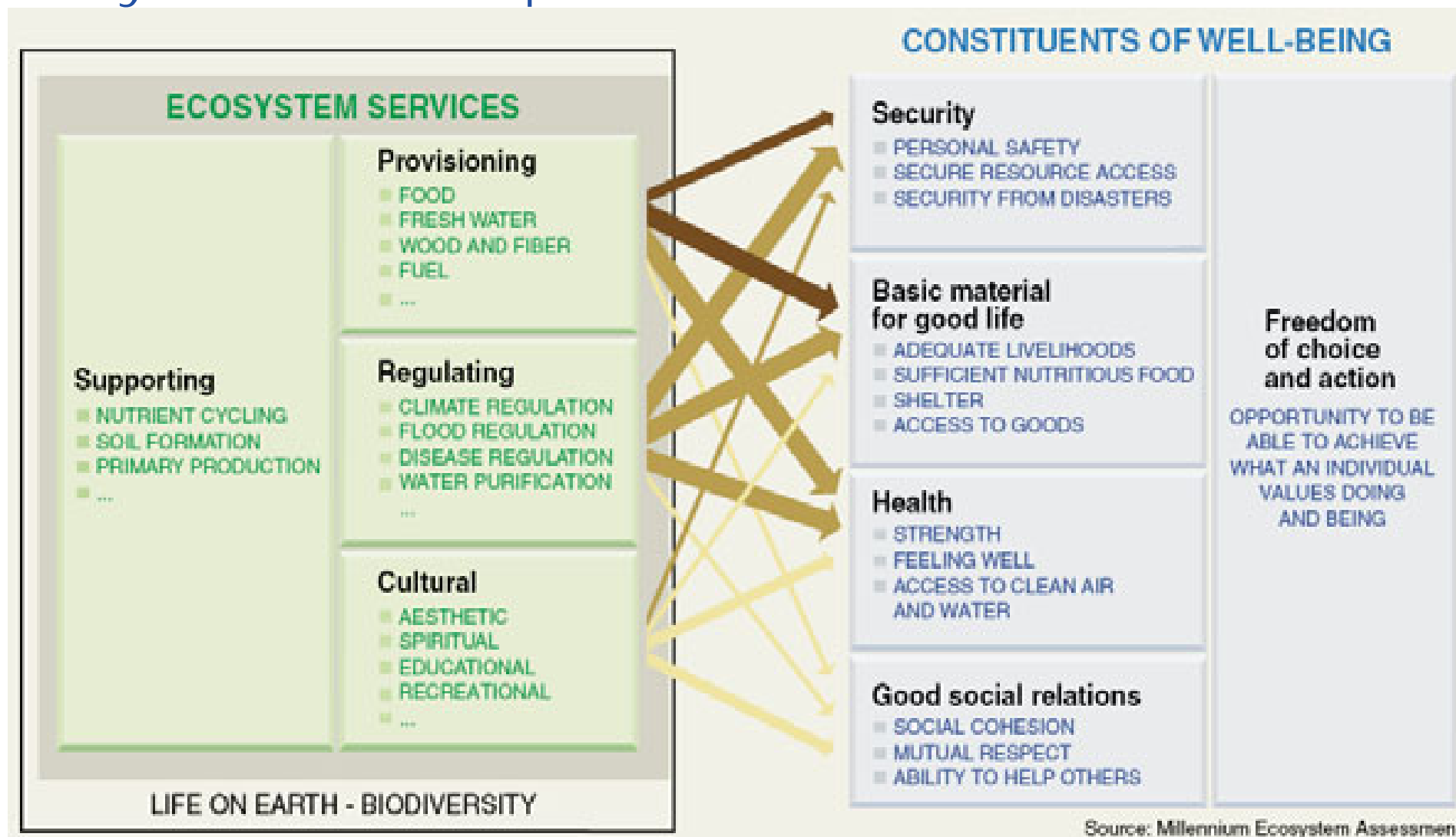
- Large numbers of rural poor people depend on forest resources for their livelihoods.
 - ✓ over 1.6 billion living in extreme poverty continues to depend to varying degrees on forests for their livelihoods ([WRI 2005](#), [The World Bank 2008](#)).
 - ✓ Of that number, 350 million people are estimated to “depend almost entirely for their subsistence and survival needs on forests” and 1.2 billion are dependent on agroforestry ([The World Bank 2008](#)).
 - ✓ In tropical countries, about 410 million people (including 60 million indigenous people) live in, or at the fringes of, tropical forest ecosystems and depend on forests resources for their subsistence ([Wiersum et al. 2005](#)).
 - ✓ Forests are important source for development of national economies especially in developing countries ([World Bank 2008](#)).

Why Forest & Adaptation?

- For mitigation – carbon sink
- For adaptation - goods & ecosystem services
- Holds biodiversity & major river basins
- Food security for traversing drought periods
- Roles in national development & family portfolios
 - As a common resource pool in Africa, it is just the right entry point for adaptation



Why Forest & Adaptation?



Thus Vulnerability of forest resources =
Vulnerability of the society

- As such, forests are therefore an indispensable asset in designing poverty reduction strategies and thus deserve to be a major player and entry point for adaptation in developing countries.
- ***The challenge is to***
 - ✓ increase both public and policy awareness of the role of forests,
 - ✓ develop livelihood adaptation strategies on a framework of forests goods and services,
 - ✓ ensure the continuity in the provisioning of forest ecosystem goods and services that contribute to food security and poverty alleviation



Why Forest & Adaptation?

Example of Cameroon

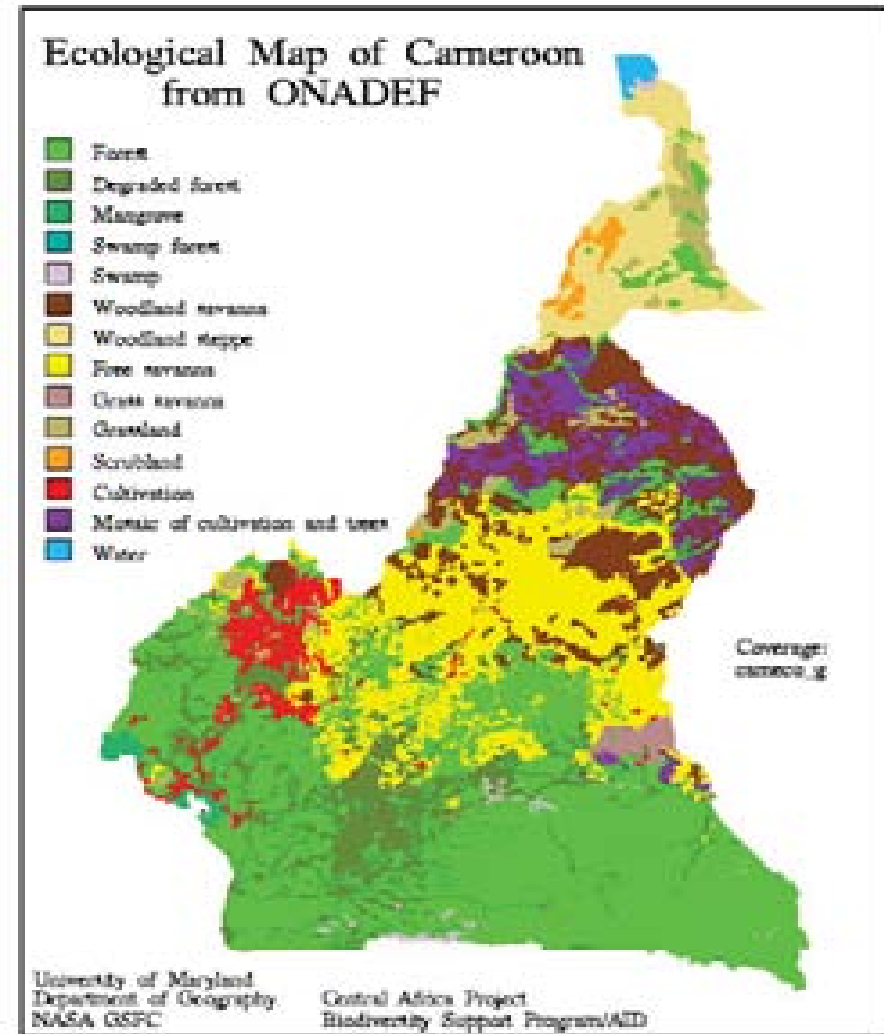
- Average value of forest products exports (1990-2000): US\$ 110 m
- Forests constitute the 3rd largest source of foreign exchange for the State, after agricultural exports and oil
- Forests contributes about 10% of GNP and 28.2 % of non-petroleum exports (Nasi et al. 2006)



Why Forest & Adaptation?

Example of Cameroon

- In Cameroon, forest ecosystem services provide security portfolios for over 80% of the predominantly rural communities, and thus, highly crucial for poverty reduction, climate change adaptation and national development.
- Incidentally, the importance of forests is often overlooked in national development processes such as policy dialogues on climate change and poverty reduction strategies



Why Forest & Adaptation?

- Deforestation and forest degradation still continue at the present rate of 0.9-1% (2000-2005)
- Continued land degradation, watersheds and desertification
- More loss of biodiversity
- Decline in environmental benefits and services
- Increase wood fuel consumption
- Continued depletion in NTFP for food and healthcare
- Over hunting and other environmental pressures on wildlife populations
- Continued loss of coastal forests (e.g. mangroves and low lying tropical forests) due to inundation or loss of wildlife species from altered habitats

Climate Change Policy Development in Cameroon

- After the 1992 World Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Cameroon signed and in 1994 ratified the UNFCCC, thereby signifying its readiness to contribute to the reduction of green house gas (GHG) emissions.
- In 2004, Cameroon ratified the Kyoto Protocol.
- In 1996, Cameroon developed and adopted the framework law on the environment
- This framework law forms the basis for all environmental policies, including steps already taken towards the reduction of GHG emissions, although many of these have been taken primarily to improve the productivity and competitiveness of the industries concerned.

Adaptation and forest policies in Cameroon

- With the exception of the First National Communication to UNFCCC (NC1), all the other policy documents are devoid of any reference to climate change policy, hence the climate change adaptation..
- Current forest policy does not contain provisions for climate change impacts and adaptation,
- And often have built-in policy rigidities rules that prevent the necessary operational changes to account for climate change.
- Existing policies also tend to be reactive to observed events rather than proactive.

Adaptation in the NC1

- In Cameroon the discussion on climate change impacts and adaptation is clustered within the National Communications to UNFCCC.
- Cameroon NC1 provides a good example of systematic progression from national level climate change projections, impact assessments, and identification of specific adaptation responses
- The impact assessments cover all crucial climate sensitive sectors for the national economy: agriculture, forestry, water management and energy.
- For each of these sectors, the NC1 provides adaptation options bearing in mind other trends in these sectors.
- Furthermore, adaptation options have also been prioritized (bearing in mind the national circumstances) for agriculture and water resource management

Adaptation in the NC1

- A close examination of the level of attention devoted to the sections pertaining to impacts, mitigation and adaptation in the NC1 shows that Cameroon has focused its activities under the UNFCCC on mitigation and related issues
- The strategies and recommendations made in the NC1 can only serve to deepen understanding of Cameroon natural resources and add resilience to the natural systems in coping with anthropogenic stresses

Forest in the NC1

- Even within the NC1, policies related to forest rely on a generalized concept of sustainable forest management and do not identify the specific changes that need to be incorporated into management strategies and policies towards achieving adaptation.

Therefore, it would be important that the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection (MINEP) consolidates a plan of action for better mainstreaming climate change adaptation into national development policy and public investment decisions.

Some positive Progress

- Though not specifically designed with the mindset of climate changes focus , Cameroon's forest policy is however considered one of the most advanced in the Congo basin for SFM ([Carret 2000](#) and [Karsenty 2006](#)).
- Cameroon was the first country to have produced and implemented a coherent forest code in the sub-region, immediately after Rio de Janeiro (1992)
- Over the past two decades, Cameroon has made institutional reviews of the forestry sector that resulted in several organizational metamorphoses shaping and reshaping the Ministry in charge of forests
- The Government also encourages the participation of the civil society in forest and wildlife management.
- Collaboration and fine-tuning of management requirements are yielding their first results, notably with the issuance of FSC certificates

Constraints to cc adaptation mainstreaming

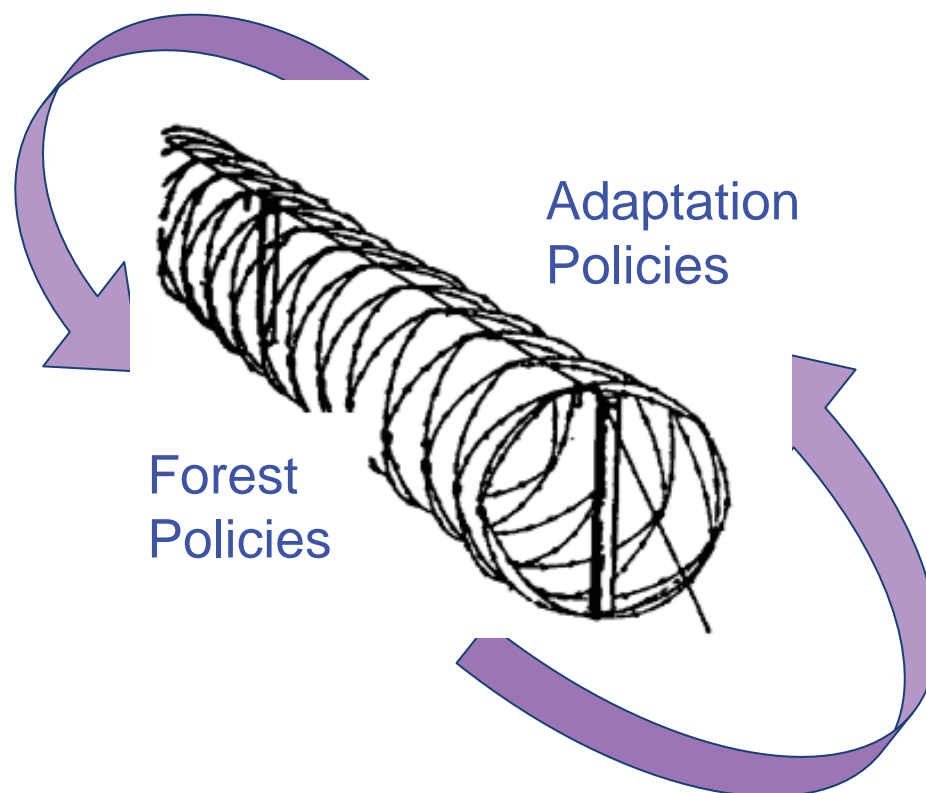
- In Cameroon, many factors underscore the limitations of the country in integrating adaptation concerns into national forest policy:
 - ✓ Poor data on adaptation options;
 - ✓ Limited awareness of adaptation among stakeholders and the population;
 - ✓ inadequate institutional capacities;
 - ✓ Corruption;
 - ✓ Lack of commitment and incentives to enforce Forest Law

Concluding remarks

- With the exception of the NC1 to UNFCCC that focused mostly on mitigation and related issues, current policy documents in Cameroon are devoid of tangible reference to climate change, hence of forest to climate change adaptation.
- While forests represent one of the Cameroon greatest natural assets that are expected to contribute to growth and macroeconomic balance of the country, their management generally falls outside climate change adaptation focus.
- Although climate change adaptation is perceived as a priority issue, the Government's current top priority is job creation and poverty reduction

Concluding remarks

**Mainstreaming adaptation into
forest policies**



Mainstreaming forest into adaptation policies

Concluding remarks

- Appropriate adaptation measures and policies as well as their implementation and monitoring between different stakeholders should be developed and agreed upon.
- This will eventually require a change from traditional top-down approaches towards multi-level information sharing, transparent decision-making, accountability, well-defined property rights and collaboration between stakeholders



Thank you

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